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CIA's 'Spooks' Get Out of Hand

IS THE Central Intelligence Agency getting out of hand? Senator Eugene McCarthy, writing in the Saturday Evening Post, says yes—and something should be done.

Senator McCarthy, who teams with his better-known colleague, Hubert Humphrey, to represent Minnesota in the Senate, may be remembered in these parts for his eloquent Stevenson nomination speech at the 1960 Democratic convention. Senator McCarthy has also been mentioned in the Midwest recently as a running mate for President Johnson in 1964.

Senator McCarthy believes that the CIA is insiduously influencing American foreign policy. Originally established by Congress in 1947 as a central clearing-house for intelligence data, the CIA today, according to the Senator, is free of congressional scrutiny and is a policy-maker in its own right.

The CIA, for example, was accused of giving direct, under-the-table financial aid to Ngo Dinh Nhu, the gray eminence behind his brother Ngo Dinh Diem, the late President of South Vietnam.

CIA money, originally belonging to American taxpayers, allegedly helped support the special military units which raided Buddhist pagodas on August 21.

Even before falling into bad odor in Saigon, the CIA got into global mischief when one of its U-2 reconnaissance planes was shot down some 1,200 miles inside Soviet territory.

The incumbent administration violated the unwritten law of international espionage—deny everything—and made a humbling admission of responsibility for the overflight.

In some quarters, the CIA is also blamed for the Bay of Pigs fiasco in 1961. When the CIA was successful, however, in helping to bring about a successful anti-Communist revolution in Guatemala, no criticism was audible.

The "department of dirty tricks," as some wag once called it, is in a predicament. Because it is by nature and function a secret organization, the CIA cannot justify its deeds to the public. And it is generally unpopular with on-the-scene officials from other departments. The CIA "spooks" in Saigon were blamed by junior State Department officials there for numerous misadventures.

Senator McCarthy recommends a congressional watchdog committee to insure that the CIA does not usurp the initiative in making foreign policy

by involving this country in dangerous adventures.

The congressional Joint Atomic Energy Committee, McCarthy argues, is privy to vital nuclear secrets, and there have been no leaks from Capitol Hill. Senator McCarthy believes that the Congress should also be entrusted with knowledge of the CIA's activities.

The brutal realities of cold war espionage do not easily conform to the demands of democratic government. It is unlikely that CIA chief John McCone will warm to the idea of a congressional committee poking into his operations.

Whether the Congress establishes a new authority over the CIA, or the executive branch clarifies present lines of responsibility, this vital intelligence organization must be kept in its proper sphere as an instrument, not as an instigator, of policy.